

# Laura and Anne 4 Ever

*Laura and Anne 4 Ever* was produced by KRO Youth Hilversum. It is a youth documentary about a very special friendship between two girls. Anne (aged 13) just died of leukaemia and Laura (14 years old) tries to move on with her life. She is afraid of forgetting about the way Anne laughed, smelled, talked ... Every note, picture or letter she finds from Anne turns into a treasure. In her spare time, Laura is drawing a lot. Right now, she is working on a drawing of her friendship with Anne. One thing is for sure: Laura will not do anything without Anne, they stay together, no matter what.

*Laura and Anne 4 Ever* was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2010 finalists in the 12-15 category.

## International experts' opinions



Figure 1: Laura and Anne.

The international experts had mixed opinions about the program. They appreciated the way the mother was shown handling the death of the daughter in the program. "I liked the fact that Anne's mother – sort of, as a way for everyone to deal with her death, she hugs her, embracing her, comes over – they can communicate, Anne's mother seemed to cope with that a lot better, because maybe they had more time to prepare for the death of Anne" (female expert, Jamaica).

They also admired the program as it showed the optimism of the characters in spite of the problems they were facing. "I thought they found a great way to actually give you hope, because both teenagers, they were really – I thought it was impressive how they dealt with the whole thing and their experience. I think it was sad, but at the same time for me as an adult it was impressive to see that they seem to handle it a little bit easier than I would actually do as an adult, because they were still full of hope. I think it was a good thing" (female expert, Germany). Another international expert appreciated the program for its portrayal of optimism and positive thought process. "I think it's a very good reference for the young audience to have this spirit and to see someone else there that inspires them to get on with life, whatever it is" (female expert, Malaysia).



Figure 2: Anne's brother.

Besides appreciating the friendship between the friends, the international experts also liked the relationship between brother and sister. "In the film of *Laura*, the brother and the sister share very touching moments. It makes me cry" (female expert, Taiwan).

Many experts strongly believed that the program was a very good example of how to tackle the issue of disability, as many children are not aware of how to handle disabled people. "This blood cancer



Figure 3: Anne's memories.



Figure 4: Laura describing her time with Anne.



Figure 5: Laura at Anne's house.

is very common. I think *Laura* should be talked about in every country – as well as our part of the world. It will be encouraged too, because these people, especially the handicaps, how to care for handicaps. I think these issues need to be taken and then projected” (male expert, Pakistan).

An interesting point was raised during the discussion about the importance of receiving permission from the disabled people to make a movie about them. “I wonder if that girl suffering wanted to be exposed in such a way, because we are receiving her story, and I think that nobody is asking her if she wants – even if she is a handicapped person. I feel that this is very interesting as an experience, because I always wonder if we have the right to expose them – the families, the situations, and who is making the decision to be on the screen” (female expert, Argentina).

Most of the experts appreciated the fact that such programs that dealt with death are made for children. “I think it is very important to go around and see that somewhere there are still people working on this kind of subject. We have a big taboo about that topic. The kind of life we have on our TV stations is mostly perfect, beautiful, fantastic; everything is very strong, cute, cool” (female expert, Italy).

The international experts appreciated the production values of the program. They liked the background music of the program. “I felt that the choice of music, in my opinion, was better, because it was not pushing me too much into that emotional corner” (female expert, Germany).

Some questioned the inclusiveness of the target audience of the program. “*Laura and Anne 4Ever* is a typical girl program. I don't think that boys will watch it” (female expert, Germany).

### International Youth Jury opinions

In 2010 the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL included the votes of an international youth jury, organized in co-operation with broadcasters worldwide. Teens between 12-15 years of age in seven countries discussed and judged 16 programs in the 12-15 years-old-category. Here is a summary of their discussions on the program *Laura and Anne 4 Ever*.

The international youth jury from *Canada* had mixed reviews about the program. They appreciated the concept of friendship in the program. “I think that as teenagers our friendships are so important so I was thinking about my own friends and about how I would react if one of them died so it was very suitable for our age” (female). They also were impressed with the music of the program. “I liked the fact that the music was light because it made it easier to show that people can get very sad about something but also with time they can get over it” (female). They also liked the production style of the program. “I think it was great that they could show images of the girl that died and the actual

interactions between the two girls. Without these images, I don't think I would have liked it as much" (male).

The international youth jury from **Georgia** had mixed reviews about the program. They appreciated the program for its theme of friendship. "Good example of good friends" (female). Few however believed that the program did not convey the message strongly enough, had "not enough emotions" (male).

The international youth jury from **Ghana** liked the program as it dealt with the theme of friendship. "Many people in our age group have best friends so this program teaches us that you don't know what you have got until you lose it; therefore, we have to cherish our friends, even the casual ones" (female). "Laura sounded very hurt although she was not emotional. You can relate their friendship to your life and learn about how to treasure friendships" (female). They also liked the character of Laura who was trying to preserve the memories of her dead friend Anna. "Laura was supportive and wanted to remember the good times they had but not to plunge into perpetual mourning. It was she who wanted to tell us about her best friend because she was emotionally motivated to do it" (female).

There were conflicts among the youth jury from **Italy** on the way the emotions of different characters were shown while they were handling the death of Anna. Some thought that the characters were artificial and not true to life: "The characters are not really believable ... When they interview the boy, the little brother, he is very detached, he doesn't show any emotion. And the girl too, she tells these things with no emotions" (male). "You don't laugh and joke when you give away the ashes of a person you love. It's senseless" (female).

Others however gave their own cultural explanation for this "detached" behaviour. "I don't know what the others believe, but I think that it's fine because she is leaving this life with all the illness and she's passing to another life. So they're happy for her" (female). Another explanation was related to cultural differences: "Maybe nobody was crying because in that country they see death differently or maybe the parts where they were crying have been cut off by the director" (male). "I think smiles were hiding their pain – everybody has his own way of expressing the pain ... Smiling is there to wish a good rebirth" (male).



Figure 8: Family members cremating Anne.

Some admired the program as it showed the friendship of two girls. "The film, I liked it although it was sad. It was my favourite because it's about friendship of two girls" (female). They liked the optimism of the program. "The way illness was portrayed as something that can happen in life and it's an obstacle that is possible to face – it may end up in a bad way but still one needs to keep the spirit high. It's better to remember her friend rather than to regret she is not there anymore" (female).



Figure 6: Anne in hospital.



Figure 7: Anne describing her experiences.

The international youth jury from *Lebanon* liked the program for its message. “We should never ever lose hope, and that is what is important about the movie” (male). They felt an emotional connection with the program. “We felt her suffering when her friend died, it moved me overall” (male). They appreciated the fact that the good moments that were shared in a relationship were shown in the program. “Good moments never die, I respected the fact that there are loyal friends that try to make a difference in the name of friendship” (male). “I liked the drawing part, and the good moments they passed together ... far from the sad moments. Overall it is nice” (female). However, few found some aspects of the program to be boring. “Nice movie, boring at some times, touching in some others, overall it is ok” (male).

All the members of the International youth jury from *Nepal* liked the program as it showed the value of friendship. “The film proves that a friend in need is a friend indeed” (female). They also agreed that the film offered them the lesson of never to lose hope in adverse situations. “Though she is ill she never gives up her hope and handles the situation very well. This film encourages not to give up hope” (female).

The international youth jury from *Venezuela* liked the program as it showed the strength of the friendship between two people in spite of its sad story. “I thought it was very good because it reminded people that one should not forget the people who died even when leaving them behind” (female).

Target Audience 7,7	Idea 7,3	Script 7,1	Realization 7,6
Average Score per Category by experts' voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2010			